(c) the States and UTs likely to derive benefits from such a decision?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) and (b) In accordance with the existing FDI policy, FDI up to 100 per cent is permitted under the automatic route in Floriculture, Horticulture, Development of seeds, Animal Husbandry, Pisciculture, Acquaculture and Cultivation of Vegetable and Mushrooms under controlled conditions and services related to Agro and allied sectors. FDI upto 100 per cent, with prior Government approval, is permitted in Tea plantation subject to the conditions of divestment of 26 per cent equity of the company in favour of an Indian partner/Indian public within a period of five years and with the prior approval of the State Government concerned in case of future land use change. FDI upto 100 per cent under the automatic route is also allowed in the Food Processing Industry and for infrastructure facilities like cold storage, transportation etc. There is no proposal to further ease the FDI norms in agro processing and agro infrastructure.

(c) Does not arise.

Stable interest rate for educational loans

†323. SHRI AJAY SINGH CHAUTALA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government will keep interest rate on educational loans stable for the students;

(b) if so, interest rate on educational loans;

(c) whether Government are going to fix four per cent interest rate on educational loans in near future; and

(d) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (d) The interest rates have been deregulated and banks are free to fix interest rates themselves with the approval of their Boards. Banks have been advised to fix their Benchmark Prime Lending Rate (BPLR) after taking into account cost of funds, transaction cost, risk factor, margin and other overhead expenses. As per the revised Model Education Loan Scheme, 2004, the banks are to charge interest on education loan upto Rs.4 lakh at BPLR and above Rs. 4 lakh at BPLR + 1 per cent. Simple interest is to be charged during the repayment holiday/ moratorium period.

Investor's awareness programme for non-metro cities

324. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the SEBI proposes to commence investor's awareness programme for the non-metro cities;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the details of the programme and partner agencies; and

(c) whether Government propose to introduce such programme at the school level through new NCERT books?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The programme envisages partnership with the Exchanges, National Institute of Securities Markets, Investor Associations and State Governments.

(c) There is no proposal for introducing investors awareness programme at the school level through new NCERT textbooks. However, Government consider a course on personal finance at school level useful.

Hiring of PAN cards by share brokers

†325. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that share brokers are hiring PAN cards from the PAN card holders and thus, money of terrorist organizations also is being invested in the share market;

(b) whether it is also a fact that a scandal of fake Demat accounts was detected in Indian market during the year 2005;

(c) if so, the number of persons found guilty in it so far and the action taken against them; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to check the practice of getting PAN cards on hire?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has informed that verification by the stock exchanges has not led to any such finding.

(b) SEBI has noticed certain irregularities in a few Initial Public Offerings made during 2003-05.

(c) SEBI has identified 24 key operators, 82 financiers, 12 depository participants and 2 depositories, who were associated with the irregularities and issued a variety of directions, including disgorgement, monetary penalty, debarment, etc. against them.

(d) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

---

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.